

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Claims 1-19 (canceled)

20. (original) A modified nucleotide compound which contains at least one sequence having the formula MN_3M wherein N is a phosphodiester-linked unmodified 2'-deoxynucleoside moiety containing at least one guanine, adenine, cytosine or thymine moiety and M is a methylphosphonate-containing deoxynucleotide.

Claims 21-38 (canceled)

39. (previously presented) A method of inhibiting the function of an RNA, which comprises: contacting said RNA, under conditions permissive of hybridization, with a modified nucleotide compound which includes at least one sequence having the formula MN_3M wherein N is a phosphodiester-linked unmodified 2'-deoxynucleoside moiety containing at least one guanine, adenine, cytosine or thymine moiety and M is a methylphosphonate-containing deoxynucleoside.

40. (original) A method of identifying a nucleotide compound having a combination of nuclease resistance and the ability to form an RNase H substrate when in complex with an RNA, which method comprises:

- (i) preparing modified nucleotide compounds;
- (ii) selecting by exo- and endonuclease digestion those modified nucleotide compounds of (i) which are nuclease-resistant as shown by being capable of forming and electrophoretically migrating as a duplex with a complementary nucleotide compound; and
- (iii) selecting by RNase H digestion those of the nuclease-resistant nucleotide compounds of (ii) which act as substrates for RNase H when hybridized with a complementary RNA.

Claims 41-52 (canceled)